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# A NARRATIVE

Of the DREYNING of the

## Great Level of the FENNS,

EXTENDING

Into the Counties of *Northampton, Norfolk, Suffolke, Lincolne, Cambridge*  
and *Huntington*, and the *Isle of Ely*, containing above  
Three hundred thousand Acres.

**B**Y a Law of Sewers then made for dreyning of the said Level, King *JAMES* was declared to be the Undertaker of that Work, and to have for His recompence One hundred and twenty thousand Acres. This Dreyning was without effect.

By another Law of Sewers, *Francis* late Earl of *Bedford*, at the request of the Countrey, undertook to dreyn the Level, and the Countrey gave him for his recompence Ninety five thousand Acres onely, whereof King *CHARLES* was to have 12000. Acres.

The said Earl took to his assistance divers Participants, expended great summes of money, performed the Work, had Judgment, and the 95000. Acres set out by the Commissioners of Sewers, and by agreement of themselves the lot and share of such as paid not their Taxes was to be sold.

In complaint that the said Level was not perfectly dreyned, the late King *CHARLES*, by a Law of Sewers declared to be Undertaker to dreyn the same (*inter alia*) and was to have for His recompence not only 95000. Acres set out unto the said late Earl, but also 57000. Acres more out of the same places and Parishes in the same Level, and the said late Earl and his Participants were to have had 40000. Acres of the Level freed of Taxes for their charges expended, which had been of more advantage than the 95000 Acres. 1649.

In pursuance of this Law His late Majesty did enter upon the Work of dreyning, but before any consideration done, the Work was declined, and the Countrey entered upon the said 95000. Acres.

The said late Earl and his Participants made application to the then Parliament, and had their Case commended to the Commons, but the Wars happening, the Works made aswell by the said late Earl as by the King, fell to decay, and were ruinous and useles.

The said Earl of *Bedford* and the Participants of his late Father, did constantly continue the prosecution of the Work, and 29 May 1649. procured a pretended Act of Parliament to dreyn the said Level, and to have for recompence the said 95000. Acres onely, as set out in 13 *Car.* with power to sell the shares of such as paid not their Taxes.

The said Earl and his Participants proceeded in the said Work, and perfected the same, expended above 100000 *l.* had Judgment and were put into possession.

In the carrying on of that Work the shares of some Adventurers were sold for non-payment of Taxes to such persons as would pay the Taxes arere onely, and without any advantage to the said Earl and his Participants, and not any one Adventurer but might have been admitted to his share upon payment of Taxes.

The charges of dreyning expended are much more than the Lands are worth to be sold, besides there will be a constant yearly charge of about 8000 *l.* for the maintenance of the Works.

1. In this Work the Adventurers have gained a great improvement to the Kingdome, in recovering so much Land from the Waters.

2. The Kings Customes by cole-seed Grain and other Commodities much increased.

3. Great increase of all sorts of Grain, Cattel, Butter and Cheese; the Level planted and built upon, and the subsistence of thousands of Families depend upon the preservation of this Work.

4. In the prosecution of this Work the Adventurers have exhausted their Estates, some to their ruine, but all to very great loss, and in equity ought to have a further recompence and encouragement, the Countrey being the onely gainers.